



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett
Southern District of Indiana**

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES FEDERAL PROSECUTION OF SIX INDIVIDUALS IN THE SHOOTING DEATH OF TERRE HAUTE OFFICER BRENT LONG

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS - Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, announced today the federal indictment of six Terre Haute residents for their actions in connection with the shooting death of Officer Brent Long. "While the person responsible for killing Officer Long is dead, the legacy of Brent Long must not end there. I will not stand idly by and tolerate law enforcement officers being targets while they perform their sworn duty to protect us all. People who are complicit with a senseless act of violence should also be held accountable," Hogsett declared.

The shooting occurred July 11, 2011, in the 1800 block of North 8th Street in Terre Haute. Members of the Great Lakes Fugitive Task Force, comprised of Deputy United States Marshals, Indiana State Police and assisted by the Terre Haute Police Department, attempted to serve a warrant on Shaun Seeley for a felony probation violation.

According to an affidavit for a search warrant prepared by the Indiana State Police, members of the task force went to the residence and found it to be occupied by several persons. Shaun Seeley did not appear to be present. The officers removed Defendants Heather Elkins, C.J. Elkins, Utterback, Torres and Padgett from the residence and they were all questioned regarding Seeley's whereabouts. Three are alleged to have affirmatively responded that Seeley was not inside the residence.

Officer Brent Long and his K-9 partner, Shadow, entered the residence to look for Seeley. Officer Long's K-9 partner indicated the presence of someone inside a closet. Officers outside the residence heard gunfire. An unknown person continued to fire at officers from inside the residence. Members of the Terre Haute Special Response Team were called to the scene and eventually made entry into the residence. They were able to recover Officer Long and take him to a local hospital. Seeley was found in the residence, dead, with an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound. Seeley was in possession of Long's firearm and ammunition.

Further investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Indiana State Police, the Vigo County Sheriff's Department and the Terre Haute Police Department.

That investigation involved interviews of Defendants Torres and Padgett. During the interviews, Torres is alleged to have falsely claimed that she and C. J. Elkins were asleep and were unaware Seeley was inside the residence. During his interview, Padgett is alleged to have falsely stated that a witness, Cyrus Mitchell, was not present at the residence just before the officers arrived to serve the warrant on Seeley.

Investigation also involved efforts to determine the source of the weapon used by Seeley. It was revealed that Scott Griffy, 40, of Terre Haute, sold a 9mm handgun to Seeley in June of 2011. Griffy is a convicted felon who can not legally possess a firearm. According to the federal indictment, Griffy knew Seeley also to be a convicted felon, yet sold the firearm to him. This 9 mm handgun, illegally possessed by Griffy, illegally sold to Seeley, is alleged to be the firearm used in the death of Officer Long.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthias Onderak, who is prosecuting the case for the government, the defendants face the following sentences and fines:

Scott Griffy 40, Terre Haute

- Unlawful sale of a firearm to a prohibited person
- Unlawful possession of a firearm by a convicted felon
- Unlawful possession of firearm ammunition by a convicted felon

If convicted, all counts are punishable by a prison sentence up to 10 years and a \$250,000 fine.

Heather Elkins, 23, Terre Haute

Charles Elkins, 23, Terre Haute

Roberta Utterback, 51, Terre Haute

Jenny Torres, 23, Terre Haute

Jesse Padgett, 21, Terre Haute

All charged with making a material false statement. If convicted, these charges are punishable by a prison sentence up to five years and a \$250,000 fine.

In 2011, 117 police officers have been killed in the line of duty, 47 of them by use of a firearm. U.S. Attorney Hogsett said, “too many police officers are being killed in our communities by individuals who have no legal right to possess a firearm.” Hogsett added, “while in the abstract, the charge of making a false statement may seem trivial and insignificant, the circumstances of this case demonstrate the value of this federal prosecutorial tool in assisting our state and local law enforcement partners.”

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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